



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Contact: Emily Gralak  
Communications and Marketing Specialist  
emily@incampuscompact.org  
317-274-6500

## **University of Southern Indiana faculty member receives grant to advance early childhood education locally**



EVANSVILLE, IN – Ilfa Zhulamanova, assistant professor of education at the University of Southern Indiana, was awarded a Faculty Fellowship grant worth \$5,000 from [Indiana Campus Compact](#), a partnership of higher education institutions that prepares college students to advance the public good. Zhulamanova will work on a collaborative research project with other Faculty Fellows from across Indiana, as well as an individual project that will focus on storytelling in early childhood education.

Zhulamanova’s project will establish a new connection between USI and Carver Community Center in Evansville. USI students involved in the project will gain a real-life learning experience, and children at Carver will gain a chance to experience a storytelling approach to teaching that is embedded with their natural learning process.

“Students enrolled in my course will work with Carver early childhood teachers to collect stories, design various ways of presenting stories to children and their parents, assist teachers with organizing storytelling activities, and create take-home kits for parents and guardians,” Zhulamanova said. “With the assistance of school administration and teachers, I envision engaging local families, community members, students, and instructors to tell stories to children using flannel board, puppet plays and shadow theater. I believe utilizing this simple strategy will have a strong impact on developing a culturally relevant, community-based curriculum in Carver classrooms and increase parent engagement in children’s learning.”

The project will serve as a vehicle to connect with the community and help produce teachers who are more tolerant, altruistic, culturally aware, and socially responsible in their communities, society, and world at large.

David Wagner, executive director of Carver, said, “This is an authentic collective impact partnership in sharing mutual outcomes that will have an enduring impact on the service-learning project students, the Carver families, and staff. This partnership will embed tangible information and resources in Carver that will create continuous opportunities for the organization and community.”

The University of Southern Indiana is adding \$1,500 in matching funds to the \$5,000 Faculty Fellows grant from Indiana Campus Compact. The university’s contribution highlights its commitment to leveraging its resources to benefit the community.

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#### **About Indiana Campus Compact**

Indiana Campus Compact is a partnership of Indiana’s public, private, and community college higher education institutions focused on advocating, implementing, and improving service engagement, so that students graduate as well-informed, engaged and productive members of society, who are fully enabled to provide leadership and service that advances the public good in their communities. For more information, please visit [www.indianacampuscompact.org](http://www.indianacampuscompact.org).